



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

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Photo: Land O'Lakes

Land O'Lakes' Chief of Party presents new milking equipment to a widow farmer who received a donated cow from local farmers as part of a USAID sponsored project.

Revitalizing Afghanistan's Dairy Industry

An estimated 80 percent of Afghans earn a living through farming. Many also raise cows to produce milk and support their families. Afghan cows remain in dire condition due to drought and neglect. Farmers, isolated from the outside world, lost much knowledge about techniques to care for animals which could have helped improve their cows' health.

According to Land O'Lakes' dairy expert Lockie Gary, *"Dairy cattle production and animal husbandry is seriously flawed in Afghanistan. The single most glaring deficiency is inadequate nutrition. The cattle are starving, beginning at birth, resulting in stunted growth, delayed puberty and breeding, immature reproductive tracts, insufficient energy for reproduction, and pitifully low milk production."*

USAID is significantly improving dairy production through a project that teaches farmers how to better feed and care for their animals. Making milk collection more sanitary and improving storage produces higher quality milk. In a culturally sensitive approach, trainers work directly with the people who care for the cows—the women in the households. Women veterinarians train female leaders in targeted villages reaching 600 to 700 farmers. To multiply the impact, the program is identifying other women who can travel to isolated villages to provide training.

As a result of training, project farmers almost always keep feed and water available for their cows. Project cattle are healthier, with less parasites; and they are being maintained in cleaner environments. Female farmers now wash their hands before milking, increasing sanitation during milking. These procedures result in farmers producing cleaner milk which is being sold for a higher price.

Over the long term, the project will organize farmer associations and cooperatives, which will allow farmers to get more value out of the milk they produce. Eight milk collection centers will be established, the first of which was constructed in Sofyan village of Charikar and the second is nearly complete in Jabul Saraj, both in Parwan province. Although most collection centers will be built in Parwan, three will be constructed in Kunduz and another may be built in Mazar-e Sharif. Using a design developed by a dairy project in Azerbaijan, surplus shipping containers are used to contain milk collection and processing equipment. Allowing farmers to cool their milk after collection helps secure a higher price for it in the market.

U.S. Agency for International Development
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Photo: Land O'Lakes

One of the women Afghan veterinarians uses special measuring tape to determine the weight of a farmer's cow.

"We have 85 farmers in this area cooperating with this dairy revitalization program. Their cows are producing more milk, and the farmers are earning more profits. But we have 1,100 farmers in this village, and we need all of them to be involved in this program."

-President of the local Shura in Charikar
addressing a crowd of over 100 participants
at the first ever Livestock Field Day, October 2005



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Photos: RAMP, Chemonics

Farmers store grain in a holding bin designed hold 8.8 metric tons.

USAID and USDA's Agricultural Education Project

USAID and USDA established a capacity building project with Afghanistan's Ministry of Higher Education. The \$4.2 million program aims to promote agriculture and veterinary science education at Afghan universities.

Although the faculties of agriculture and veterinary science at Kabul University are the focus of the program, the universities in Balkh, Herat, Kandahar, and Jalalabad will receive scholarships for staff, short-term training for established instructors, and selective equipment purchases.

The Capacity Building Project began with modest, but important investments. It provided eight laboratories built by the Japanese, a computer lab with 26 computers donated by Purdue University, a small online library supported by the University of Arizona with USAID funds, and office furniture. Eleven staff were sent to Japan and Pakistan for graduate studies.

Now operational for about a year, the project has accomplished a great deal. It established an English language pilot program for all students in the agriculture and veterinary science departments and trained faculty through a Teaching Symposium. The project linked to two Indian universities that provide Masters of Science degree training for 18 junior faculty members and short term training for several senior faculty. Two U.S. and two Indian specialists initiated curriculum development and planning through an external review and planning workshop. The renovation of the agriculture and veterinary science buildings provided the basic infrastructure for classrooms, labs, and offices. A newly constructed irrigation system revived the university farm.

SECURITY INCIDENTS

On May 1, on the Kandahar-Herat road in Kandahar Province, three vehicles were burned and two persons were taken hostage by suspected Taliban. U.S. Protection & Investigations (USPI) met the drivers at the scene to assess damage. The two hostages were later released. USPI provides security for USAID's road activities.

The main purpose of the security incident graph is to provide a general update on security incidents as they relate to reconstruction in Afghanistan. The graph is simply a mechanism for tracking security incidents and does not analyze incidents or attempt to discern the motives or affiliation of the perpetrators. The focus of the graph is the frequency of incidents and their impact on USAID's work and also that of the development community writ large. The graph does not attempt to track all incidents regularly faced in Afghanistan.

